Gloſt. No, what needes then that terribe diſpatch of it into your pocket, the qualitie of nothing hath not ſuch need to hide it ſelfe, lets ſee, come if it bee nothing I ſhall not need ſpectacles.

Ba. I beſeech you Sir pardon me, it is a letter from my brother, that I haue not all ore read, for ſo much as I haue peruſed, I find it not fit for your liking.

Gloſt. Giue me the letter ſir.

Baſt. I ſhall offend either to detaine or giue it, the contents as in part I vnderſtand them, are too blame.

Gloſt. Lets ſee, lets ſee?

Baſt. I hope for my brothers iuſtification, he wrot this but as an eſſay, or taſt of my vertue. *A Letter.*

Gloſt. This policie of age makes the world bitter to the beſt of our times, keepes our fortunes from vs till our oldnes cannot reliſh them, I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppreſſion of aged tyranny, who ſwaies not as it hath power, but as it is ſuffered, come to me, that of this I may ſpeake more, if our father would ſleepe till I wakt him, you ſhould inioy halfe his reuenew for euer, and liue the beloued of your brother *Edgar.*

Hum, conſpiracie, ſlept till I wakt him, you ſhould enioy halfe his reuenew, my ſonne *Edgar*, had hee a hand to write this, a hart, and braine to breed it in, when came this to you, who brought it?

Baſt. It was not brought me my Lord, ther's the cunning of it, I found it throwne in at the caſement of my cloſet.

Gloſt. You know the Caractar to be your brothers?

Baſt. If the matter were good, my Lord I durſt ſweare it were his but in reſpect, of that I would faine thinke it were not,

Gloſt. It is his?

Baſt. It is his hand my Lord, but I hope his heart is not in the contents.

Gloſt. Hath he neuer heretofore ſoũded you in this buſines?

Baſt. Neuer my Lord, but I haue often heard him maintaine it to be fit, that ſons at perfit age, & fathers declining, his father ſhould be as ward to the ſonne, and the ſonne mannage the reuenew.

Gloſt.

Gloſt. O villaine, villaine, his very opinion in the letter, abhorred villaine, vnnaturall deteſted brutiſh villaine, worſe then brutiſh, go ſir ſeeke him, I apprehend him, abhominable villaine where is he?

Baſt. I doe not well know my Lord, if it ſhall pleaſe you to ſuſpend your indignation againſt my brother, til you can deriue from him better teſtimony of this intent: you ſhould run a certaine courſe, where if you violently proceed againſt him, miſtaking his purpoſe, it would make a great gap in your owne honour, & ſhake in peeces the heart of his obediẽce, I dare pawn downe my life for him, he hath wrote this to feele my affection to your honour, and to no further pretence of danger.

Gloſt. Thinke you ſo?

Baſt. If your honour iudge it meete, I will place you where you ſhall heare vs conferre of this, and by an aurigular aſſurance haue your ſatiſfaction, and that without any further delay then this very euening.

Gloſt. He cannot be ſuch a monſter.

Baſt. Nor is not ſure.

Gloſt. To his father, that ſo tenderly and intirely loues him, heauen and earth! *Edmund* ſeeke him out, wind mee into him, I pray you frame your buſines after your own wiſedome, I would vnſtate my ſelfe to be in a due reſolution.

Baſt. I ſhall ſeeke him ſir preſently, conuey the buſineſſe as I ſhall ſee meanes, and acquaint you withall.

Gloſt. Theſe late eclipſes in the Sunne and Moone portend no good to vs, though the wiſedome of nature can reaſon thus and thus, yet nature finds it ſelfe ſcourg'd by the ſequent effects, loue cooles, friendſhip fals off, brothers diuide, in Cities mutinies, in Countries diſcords, Pallaces treaſon, the bond crackt betweene ſonne and father; find out this villaine *Edmund*, it ſhal looſe thee nothing, doe it carefully, and the noble and true harted *Kent* baniſht, his offence honeſt, ſtrange ſtrange!

Baſt. This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are ſicke in Fortune, often the ſurfeit of our owne behauiour, we make guiltie of our diſaſters, the Sunne, the Moone, and the Starres, as if we were Villaines by neceſſitie, Fooles by heauenly compulſion, Knaues, Theeues, and Trecherers by ſpirituall

 predomina-

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE *King Lear* (STC 22292) LONDON, 1608 THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY (Arch. G d.44[5]) Octavo